M
342 in three large stakes to support the main crosspieces. Then he builds the vertical framework of his hut by planting strong, straight stalks all around the perimeter, 70 centimeters apart. To these vertical stalks, the native attaches horizontal crosspieces made of strong raffia stems and spaced from five to seven centimeters apart. The same method is followed for the interior partition, although weaker and thinner raffia stems are used. The space reserved for the door is left open. At this stage, the dwelling resembles a large cage, [32] fully open to the sky, with its bars

M
S
342

M
853
576

Fig. 27. Hut of the Wadia and Mosengere.

arranged horizontally. It remains in that state all through the period of time required to prepare the materials that will line the interior walls. To this end, the native cuts leaves of the nse-nse, a very common type of palm throughout this swampy region. The leaves are assembled in groups of four, the fronds having first been folded in along the rib and roughly braided. The free ends are tied with a fine thong, and the ribs are bound together at intervals of five centimeters. Once the leaves have been prepared, the native goes inside the hut under construction and begins to cover the walls. Proceeding systematically, he works from bottom to top, attaching the nse-nse leaves to the horizontal slats and placing them so that they overlap. When the wall has been covered, it is strengthened with a few slats placed vertically and tied to the outer framework

843 837 This law requiring a most strict fidelity lasts until the end of the bokeka for the husband, but until the weaning of the child for the wife. It is especially strict for the period of seclusion (see below, Article III, 3).

The violation of the essential stipulation of this interdict (-fénda bokeka) results either in the death of the woman during pregnancy and especially during seclusion or in the death of the child later on. [477]

A. If the woman dies during this period, the suspicion is placed a priori on her husband. The Nkundó say aɓfénda wǎlí, "he has transgressed against his wife." Unless he can prove his innocence through public actions, the judgment of a magician, or autopsy[sic].

If the woman has been the victim of a seducer, he is held responsible and must pay a large indemnity equivalent to the bride price that was paid for the deceased. If no other man is involved, the affair has no consequences.

843 763 754 845 953 In the past the combined autopsy and Caesarian section was always performed. It had a dual purpose: to remove the child and to examine the mother. If the operation revealed the existence of a "stomach" (likundú), the deceased was of a noxious (liloka) nature or constitution and therefore caused the death of her child. If the child remained alive, it proved that he was of a magically superior nature and was able to resist the natural evil spells of his mother, which thus turned against their unwitting author. (1)

1. The Nkundó believe that only animals have a "stomach" (likundú). If a human being has one, that is, if his viscera are large, curved, in compartments, in a word, abnormal, that person is an evildoer. He commits evil acts voluntarily or, most frequently, unknowingly. Some men with a likundú can be recognized by the fact that they eat their nails, hair, etc. The Nkundó must certainly have observed relationships between this habit and a deformity of the stomach.

853 The child is given to a wet nurse (a kinswoman, a stranger, a Botswa woman, depending on who is available).

847 845 843 If the mother's body shows no signs of evil-doing or of "the hatred of others," it is thought that her death was caused by evil spells on the part of the child. Thereupon some kill the child to prevent it from doing harm during its whole life; others, on the contrary, spare it despite everything.

843 837 If the husband (for it is he above all who is involved, since he is most exposed to possible lapses) has unfortunately been guilty of misconduct, his wife has only a slim chance [478] of salvation. Nevertheless, it is still possible for her to be saved, on condition that from then on her husband abstain from any sexual act and from all the accidental gestures and actions described above. The least he can do under these circumstances is to inform his wife of his indiscretion so that she can take precautions. If he wants to [672] ward off any possibility of causing his wife's certain death, he sends her home and gives his father-in-law a pledge (ndanga) through which he recognizes his guilt and shows his intention to assume the entire responsibility for his misdeed. An upright man prefers to act in this fashion, for he never knows whether one day he will not inadvertently violate one of the prohibitions.

B. The child's death is the result of the putrefaction of 853 837 the mother's milk, the mother being thus incapable of nursing. As in the preceding case, the offense is a priori imputed to the husband -- isé aɔoma bɔna la ndota. (1) Since he has wronged no

[753]

1. Ndota is an illness caused by the violation of prescriptions of a sexual nature (See Chapter I, Part II, Article IV, 2, A).

one but himself, no palaver ensues; the "natural" punishment is sufficient. This does not mean that he is not the object of evil tongues; people point at him and at times remind him of his misdeed. To remove the blame from himself, he can resort to

853 837 an ordeal or ask a magician's judgment or a magical practice to reveal the culprit. The culprit who is discovered is not subject to any social sanction; he is punished by the ordeal itself or the spell cast against him.

[684] If the mother's adultery is proven through her having been caught in the act, her seducer is considered guilty. He must pay the death indemnity (20 to 30 copper rings). The woman is not at all involved as far as society is concerned; it is a matter between her and her husband.

757 854 In order to prevent any harmful effect on the child, the Nkundó resort to a potion called bondandota, which will be explained in [479] the next article, 3. "Medication" by scarfication might also be mentioned. This therapy is applied to the parents as well as to the child. If the father is wealthy, he invites the wife's family to come and perform the operation themselves. As in all comparable situations, the invitation is accompanied by the handing over of a pledge, and farewell presents (belingako) are given at the end of the visit. In addition the wife very often goes to live with her parents for some time after her seclusion in order to increase the efficacy of the treatment.

843 [684] The sanction incurred for a violation of the secondary stipulations is less serious. For instance, the pregnant woman suffers from violent migraines, which often cause fainting and sometimes make delivery very difficult; thus they can even cause death. The husband is seldom bothered by these headaches. But he takes great pains to faithfully observe the law in order to spare his wife such painful consequences and to avoid the death of the child being born.

Apart from sexual abstention and the rules connected with it, the couple are also subject to various prohibitions which are clearly based on superstitious ideas. Thus:

1) They must neither go down into a well nor dig in the earth. The woman would die, for it is as if they were digging her grave.

2) They must not carry anything together with another person, for that is how corpses are carried, and such carrying would be the cause of death, through imitation of the woman's funeral procession.

837 is not morally condoned, and a woman who resorts to it does not
834 escape criticism. She is compared to a goat, who does not have
789 a regular and steady husband: álómya bóna lontaa, "she nurses her child as a goat does." (1)

1. The opposite of lómya lontaa, -- if it is used to show the contrast -- is lómya lontómbá.

When the separation ceremony is ended, the mother is
846 adorned with all her ornaments and goes out to walk in a procession through the village. The child is carried by an older sister, a niece, etc. He is taken around the village, bánangya bǒna l'olólo Small presents are offered him everywhere -- an arrow, a small knife, a hairpin, etc There is no feast, however; if that honor were accorded him he would die of it (for when someone dies, there is always a feast of farewell in his honor). [493]

## Article IV. Nursing

● 853 During the first few days after birth an infant does not suck the milk of its mother, since it is "too hot." He is fed by a third person, preferably a relative.

On the third day the following occurs:

953 1) The mother's breasts are massaged (-kulola baćle). For
757 this purpose the Nkundó use leaves of the bǔte creeper and the lilongyá plant (Adenostemma viscosum Forst.), a green leaf from a banana tree called nselenge, several pieces of peeled sugar cane, the tips of the dried leaves of any banana tree, and sometimes other plants are added as well. All the ingredients are crushed, then boiled, and white sand and a bit of red paint are mixed in with them. The mixture is called ndengó. It is prepared by the women who are in charge of massaging the breasts. The bǔte leaves, however, must be picked by the father. He goes to the forest early in the morning and first shakes the creeper so that all leaves that are not firmly attached will fall off. Then he climbs it and picks the desired

● 853 757 quantity of leaves, which he puts in his little basket called ilámbá. If a leaf falls in the course of this operation, he must stop and throw away all that he has picked up to that point. The massage cannot take place on that day for it would cause the child to die falling and withering like a leaf. The father must start all over again the next day.

There are always two masseuses: one of the husband's kinswoman and one of the wife's. (1) They crush the leaves in

1. The Injóló sometimes permit a man to perform the massage.

[783] the same single mortar (eoka). The mother meanwhile must make her public confession, of which we will speak again in a moment. When the substances intended for rubbing have been prepared, the two masseuses begin their operation, which must be quite painful. The husband's relative takes care of the right breast, the wife's concentrates on [494] the left. (1)

1. This is a natural arrangement for our people; the term used to indicate "husband" (bóme) is undoubtedly etymologically related to the one denoting "the right" (elóme), and there is some likelihood that the same is true for wálf (wife) and ifili (left).

They energetically massage the breasts from the top to the bottom with the mixture. After a few minutes they test the milk by letting a few drops run out onto a burning fragment of pottery. If the reaction is normal the mother begins to nurse. If on the other hand, the milk curdles and solidifies (bagle báonda) like rubber, it is a sign that it is of bad quality because of the presence of an internal boil in the breast, called itsf. In that case the knowledge and skill of a woman expert is called upon. The latter rubs the leaves of a creeper between her hands in order to extract

853 751 the sap, which she then mixes with water. The resulting liquid is oily and foams like soap. She places a few drops on a piece of banana leaf and makes a sachet of it. She holds this against the breast for a certain time until the boil, similar to a blood clot or a piece of liver, leaves the breast and enters the sachet. She then shows it to those present. From then on the mother can nurse her child without fear; her milk has become healthy and normal.

837 853 684 783 2) The mother's public confession must include the names of all the men with whom she has had carnal relations since the child's conception. Other groups, such as the Injóló, extend this obligation even to instances preceding that moment but which have not been declared at a previous occasion. The confession is public. The masseuse related to the husband begins to crush the leaves to be used in rubbing the breast; as she moves the pestle and says to the mother, "Name a man." The mother replies by giving a name. The masseuse says nyongo, "indemnity." Then all those present say yengô, yengô, yengô, "absolved." Then it is the other masseuse's turn, and she interrogates the mother in the same way. The process continues till all the names have been cited. If [495] the mother cites the name of a man who is a close relative of her husband and who therefore does not need to pay an indemnity, the masseuse does not reply nyongo. Instead a member of the husband's clan makes the gesture signifying [201] exemption: he holds the kernel of a palm nut (lolikó) in his left hand and throws it by means of a small board which he holds in his right. Among the Injóló the man takes two kernels and strikes them against each other and then throws them away. Were the woman to suppress a name the child would die. If she has no admission to make, she replies, "No one besides my husband."

The indemnity that must be paid by those who are obligated to do so consists of a hen and a bunch of bananas (or their cash value) which are to be given to the masseuses, who will then divide them. Were the accused to refuse, the husband would demand a regular indemnity from him after the end of the seclusion.

[184] The Bombwanja have this confession at the time of the fastening of the fetus. A few old women married into the clan carry out the interrogation. The kernel of the fruit of the palm is thrown by means of a knife.

837 Note, finally, that the confession is restricted to married
783 women. It is never expected of a young unmarried mother. There-
853 fore it would seem to be a practice connected with marriage (a social institution) and not with childbirth (a physiological phenomenon).

This confession is called etato or lotato, from the verb
[192] -tata, "to confess," (for which the generic term, sanga, "to say," is sometimes substituted).

I was unable to find any reason for this practice other than that of avoiding the death of the child. It is evident, however, that this explanation does not exhaust the question, although it is entirely possible that the original and deeper meaning has been lost without leaving any trace in the minds of the present generation. [496]

853 3) During the entire duration of nursing, the mother must
933 not be separated from her child. For the usual circumstances of daily life, this rule is broadly interpreted; but during sexual relations it is strict, and no exceptions or excuses are permitted. Negligence under these circumstances would inevitably bring about the death of the child by ndota as soon as the mother took it back. This rule holds for legitimate relations as much as for illicit ones. Therefore the mother must always keep her child at her breast.

953 4) If at some point during nursing, the milk no longer flows
[151] in sufficient quantity, the mother is given a potion consisting of
[278] the extract of the bark of the bolóngé tree (which has a fruit containing a very sweet milky sap). Then she eats vegetables called lotélé. (1)

1. The leaves of this plant are also ordinarily eaten as vegetables, but they are consumed especially by those who possess the modern magical practice known as boyaôli.

[262] 5) An accident to which the Nkundó attach great importance is the rejection or vomiting of milk into the mouth of an adult, even if the person affected is the infant's mother. Such a person

§53 may not eat meat if the child is male, or fish if it is female, until the child in question is grown and kills either an animal (or bird) or a fish, according to the case, and has given it to the victim of the accident. If the child dies young, the person is accused of having violated the prohibition and is obliged to pay a large indemnity. This extremity is not usually reached, however, for the one to whom the accident has befallen scrupulously keeps away from everything that might cause this sort of murder. Then, if death occurs and he has nothing with which to reproach himself, he can resort to an ordeal or to the verdict of a test based on superstition. In addition in villages that have Batswa, a woman of that §63 race must nurse the child for an instant after the accident before its mother gives it her breast again. [497]

6) The child is carried on the shoulder, and as soon as it is §54 capable of holding on, on the hip. It does not take many weeks for it to become accustomed to that position. When the mother has to hold it for a long period of time (during a march, on a trip, etc.), she puts it in a scarf-shoulder strap (lombe), made from creepers that are scraped and woven as for a mat, or from a cloth of raffia fibers, or even from a pelt (nowadays it is often made from a piece of European cloth). The scarf must be sturdy, for were it to tear and the infant fall, far-reaching consequences would result; all of that woman's subsequent children would be condemned to die in the mother's womb or during the period of nursing.

As the child grows it is sometimes carried astride the mother's back, either because she does not like to be separated from it, or because the tyranny of the little one forces her to keep it with her even during her work, errands, and even dances. She remedies this awkward situation if possible by resorting to the assistance of an older girl, a young niece or cousin, or a little boy from among the immediate kin.

When the child rests during the day, it is laid on an ordinary bed or on a movable bed (boánga), without any special arrangements. It has no difficulty sleeping soundly on such hard couches.

7) Weaning. Although a child is gradually accustomed §62 to solid food, it does not stop nursing. As it grows older, the nursing times are spaced farther and farther apart. But the child

862 does not really stop nursing till it is about two years old, and sometimes two and a half if it has a weak constitution.

Weaning is not accompanied by any ceremony or feast. In order to break the child's habit, the mother smears her nipples [824] with the sap of the liféte fruit (a kind of small sweet pimento or eggplant) or with a pimento-pepper extract (imbénga). Sometimes she leaves the child with some relative (daughter, sister, etc.) for a time [498] while she lives elsewhere.

As we have seen above, after weaning, the ekelé-bokeka period comes to an end for the mother, and her infidelities no longer have repercussions on the life of her child.

● [853] 8) If the mother dies while the infant is still being nursed, [589] the task of nursing is turned over to some woman who is disposed to undertake it even a Botswa, and there always is one. After the child is weaned the woman is suitably recompensed. The use of [235] goat's milk is unknown.

854 751 9) Young children frequently suffer convulsions. This illness is thought to be caused by hawks, and for that reason it is called [953] mpulú (bird). The Nkundó try to prevent it by hanging an amulet around children's necks; it is usually the clavicular triangle of a hen's carcass. In addition they know a remedy whose purpose is to strengthen the nerves: the child is laid on a mat stretched out anywhere on the roof of the hut. An eyewash (bolóf) is prepared from the sap of leaves from the litóyansombo bush and extract of mbólé (fruit of the bosoombó). Using a leaf shaped into a horn, a few drops are put into the child's eyes. Then the father or some other relative pulls out the mat from under the child and lifts it several times, shouting: tí tí tí.

856 10) No special importance is attached to teething. But a child whose upper teeth come in before the lower ones (a defect called ingondo) is considered abnormal. Therefore he is forbidden to eat the first fruits of hunting or fishing in an enclosure (mpao), lest the latter lose their productivity.